

AREN'T MULTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE BEING SAVED THROUGH CCM?

Reprinted December 6, 2011 (first published October 26, 2010, 2010 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Promoters of Christian rock music claim that the bottom line is that God is blessing it and that many young people are saved through it. Hard rocking Mylon LeFevre claimed that tens of thousands signed decision cards at his concerts:

"There are 52,000 people who have signed a little card that says, 'Tonight, for the first time, I understand who Jesus is and how He does things, and I want Him to be my Lord'" (LeFevre, cited by John Styll, "Mylon LeFevre: The Solid Rocker," *CCM Magazine*, March 1986).

This is an amazing statistic by any standard, especially in light of the fact that LeFevre admitted that he did not get right with God until 1980 and the aforementioned statement was made in 1986.

Many other CCM performers claim that people are being saved through their ministries. The 12th Rock of Ages Festival in Napa County, California, in October 2010, reported 250 saved.

The book *Soul 2 Soul* contains salvation testimonies from CCM groups such as 4 HIM and dc Talk. They say that people have even been rescued from committing suicide through their music.

I am thankful for every soul that is saved regardless of whether or not we agree in all matters with those involved in the conversion. I do believe that some CCM groups are genuinely concerned for the salvation of young people through their music and concerts, and I do believe that some young people are being saved in the context of Contemporary Christian Music.

Even if people are being saved through a ministry, though, it does not follow that it is to be commended in its entirety. Many have been saved through Billy Graham's ministry, including my own wife and mother-in-law, but this does not mean we should overlook the dangerous and unscriptural methodology of his ecumenical evangelism, of how he has turned tens of thousands of his converts over to Roman Catholic and liberal Protestant churches. Jehoshaphat was a godly king who did many things to glorify God in his life and ministry, but the prophet was instructed to rebuke him for his serious disobedience in yoking together with Ahab.

"And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD" (2 Chronicles 19:2).

The disobedience of Jehoshaphat is akin to that of evangelicals today (including contemporary Christian musicians) who refuse to practice biblical separation. Just because a church or ministry pleases God in certain areas does not mean that God will not rebuke it for unfaithfulness in others. The Lord's admonitions to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3 illustrate this. Jesus did not overlook areas of disobedience even in the best of the churches, and it is the preachers that God uses to rebuke error today. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul did not overlook Peter's disobedience in a seeming insignificant matter but rather rebuked him publicly (Gal. 2:11-13).

I would also remind CCM defenders that God has told us *how* to do evangelism, and there is absolutely nothing in the Bible about entertainment evangelism. It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16) and the Bible says that God has chosen to save people through the foolishness of preaching (1 Cor. 1:21).

When someone is saved in the context of Christian rock music, I don't believe they are saved *because of* Christian rock music but *in spite of* it.

Further, I have serious doubts about the statistics that are given of great numbers being saved through Christian rock music, and the following are the reasons for my doubts.

First, the decisions are suspect because of the message.

Salvation comes only through repentance and faith in the one true gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes through sound doctrine. Salvation does not come through a false doctrine of the gospel. Note the following Scripture carefully:

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but YE HAVE OBEYED FROM THE HEART THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE WHICH WAS DELIVERED YOU" (Romans 6:17).

The following verses remind us that salvation comes through hearing and believing the right WORDS of the Gospel:

"Who shall tell thee WORDS, WHEREBY THOU AND ALL THY HOUSE SHALL BE SAVED" (Acts 11:14).

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Colossians 1:5-6).

A corrupted message of salvation does not produce biblical salvation. The one true gospel of Jesus Christ is summarized in 1 Cor. 15:3-4: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

The Bible warns that there are false gospels and false christs.

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth ANOTHER JESUS, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive ANOTHER SPIRIT, which ye have not received, or ANOTHER GOSPEL, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him" (2 Corinthians 11:3,4).

The Galatians were sharply rebuked because they quickly turned aside to a false gospel:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto ANOTHER GOSPEL: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7).

In light of these Bible warnings, we must ask some serious questions about the claims of Contemporary Christian Music. What gospel, what doctrine of salvation, is being preached?

The answer is that the gospel is rarely clear and sound in the context of an ecumenical-charismatic CCM concert. There are exceptions, of course, but some men from within the CCM movement have admitted that this is generally true.

"One of my criticisms of those of us who use music in evangelism is the nature and content of the 'gospel' which is preached. ALL TOO OFTEN, A SUPERFICIAL KIND OF BELIEVISM IS OFFERED, along with promises of large helpings of love, joy and peace" (Graham Kendrick, CCM musician and organizer for British rock festivals, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 142).

"An analysis of the lyrics of MOST gospel songs indicates A VERY SUPERFICIAL VIEW OF SALVATION and of Christianity" (Garth Hewitt, CCM musician, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 142).

Stan Moser was the former head of Word Records and CEO of Star Song Records. He was one of the pioneers and most important executives in CCM. He was the man responsible for signing Amy Grant. In 1995, after 26 years in Contemporary Christian Music, he left it and expressed disgust with what it has become. Note his testimony about the doctrinal content of CCM:

"But to be candid, I look at THE MAJORITY OF THE MUSIC I HEAR TODAY AND THINK IT'S VIRTUALLY MEANINGLESS. ... I would probably be more inclined to call the industry 'commercial Christian music,' rather than 'contemporary Christian music'" (Stan Moser, "We Have Created a Monster," *Christianity Today*, May 20, 1996, p. 27).

In the book *Contemporary Christian Music under the Spotlight* we have given many examples of how the gospel is unclear or is corrupted in Contemporary Christian Music

Kerry Livgren, former guitarist/songwriter for the secular mega rock group Kansas, claims that many people have been saved through a song he wrote before he became a Christian! “More people have been led to Christ with [the song “Dust in the Wind”] than with everything else I’ve ever written. Not only did that song not mention Jesus, but I was not a Christian at the time. It just happened to be a truth that the song emphasized” (Kerry Livgren, *CCM Magazine*, Feb. 1989, p. 8).

Livgren is saying that many have been saved through a rock song that was written by an unsaved man and that doesn’t mention Jesus and doesn’t describe the gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection. That is ridiculously unscriptural. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). It is the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that is the power of God unto salvation through faith (Rom. 1:16).

The late Rich Mullins was a very popular CCM writer and performer. He wrote songs popularized by Amy Grant and other well-known singers. His gospel, though, was very murky. When he was killed in 1997, it was reported that he was in the process of joining the Roman Catholic Church. In his song “Screen Door” he presents the false gospel of faith plus works:

“Faith without works baby/ It just ain’t happenin’/ One is your left hand/ One is your right/ It’ll take two strong arms/ To hold on tight” (Mullins, “Screen Door”)

This song presents the false gospel that is taught by every cult today. One of the marks of false Christianity is to confuse faith and works, to mingle faith and works together for salvation. While it is true that faith without works is dead and that true saving faith produces works, it is not true that faith and works are the two strong arms by which we hold on tight to God (Eph. 2:8-10), yet that is exactly the heresy that this song teaches. Paul stated just the opposite: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Romans 11:6).

The name of Jesus Christ does not appear even once in three of Michael W. Smith’s albums--*Change Your World*, *I’ll Lead You Home*, and *Live Your Life*. The lyrics to the albums contain more than 6,000 words, but the name of Jesus is not heard even one time. The Bible says there is none other NAME under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). It is impossible to preach the gospel clearly without naming the name of Christ Jesus.

Consider the words to the song “Bargain” which Rez Band has popularized for Christian young people:

“I’ll pay any price just to get you/ I’ll work all my life and I will/ To win you, I’d stand naked, stoned, and stabbed/ I’d call that a bargain/ The best I ever had/ The best I ever had ... I’ll pay any price just to win you/ Surrender my good life or bad/ To find you/ I’m gonna drown an unsung man/ I call that a bargain/ The best I ever had...”

Rez band got this song from legendary rock guitarist Pete Townshend of the violent/immoral/occultic rock band The Who. Townshend wrote “Bargain” as a tribute to his Hindu guru Meher Baba. Townshend has testified: “Baba is Christ, because being a Christian is just like being a Baba lover” (Bob Larson, *Rock*, 1984, p. 140). Not only is it blasphemous to take a song by an immoral rock star about a Hindu guru and sing it as unto Jesus Christ, but the song itself promotes a false gospel. We do not and cannot win the true God by sacrifice. Salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Further, the sinner has no “good life” to surrender. All our righteousness is as filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). There is “none that doeth good, no, not one” (Rom. 3:12).

Note the following song by the popular CCM group Delirious. This is “Revival Town” from their *King of Fools* album:

“Well I’ve got a story to tell/ About the King above all kings/ He spoke for peace, hope and justice/
Things that we all need today/ You let a broken generation/ Become a dancing generation/ That is
revival generation/ You may not hear it on the radio/ But you can feel it in the air.”

This doctrinal murkiness is typical of the “gospel message” preached by most CCM groups today.

The following song is from “Adventures of the O.C. Supertones” (1996):

“You probably ask yourself, how’d this Jew boy get so crazy/ Come from kickin’ mad knowledge,
didn’t come from being lazy/ We got the rhythm and the rhythm’s got roots/ I’m a crazy little Hebrew
onstage wearin’ monkey boots/ I love to be onstage and sing and bimskalabimmin/ I love to be out
in the crowd a skakin’ and a swimmin’/ King David, my great grandfather, was a dancer/ King
Solomon, my great grandfather, was a romancer/ Jesus came from Jesse, but Jesse came from
Jesus/ Now come to the Lord cuz Lord Jesus frees us.”

Is that a plain presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Could someone be saved through a mixed up message like this? Not according to Romans 6:17. “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE which was delivered you.”

The following is an eyewitness description of a Deliverance concert:

“When it came time for the ‘preaching,’ the members of Deliverance took turns talking about love and victory and not being a ‘wimp.’ Nothing about repentance. Nothing about salvation or separation from the world. Instead of an altar call, there was a cattle-call yodel where all the Christians were instructed to yell for Jesus” (Jeff Godwin, *What’s Wrong with Christian Rock?* pp. 225, 226).

Aaron and Jeoffrey are a father and son music team. As much as we enjoy seeing a close father/son relationship, we cannot support Aaron and Jeoffrey because of their jazzed up worldly music and the unscriptural doctrine they sing. Note the following message from the song “Moment of Mercy” from *The Climb* album (1997):

"We've all been weakened by the choices we have made/ Wrapped in chains it seems we can't undo/ It doesn't matter what we've done or where we've been/ With one honest prayer/ We can be forgiven ... And with a simple act of faith we start to see/ Our failures are forgiven" (Aaron and Jeoffrey, "Moment of Mercy").

This is not the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul preached in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The biblical gospel says that Jesus Christ died for OUR SINS according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Aaron and Jeoffrey speak not of forgiveness of sin, but of "failures" and of "choices we have made." A failure or a bad choice is not the same thing as sin, which is disobedience to God's law. This is a wrong-headed approach to salvation and it is common among CCM performers. Further, Aaron and Jeoffrey's gospel is not achieved by faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ for sin, but by an "honest prayer" and "a simple act of faith." People can honestly pray many things and not be saved, and a simple act of faith in itself does not save. The act of faith must be directed specifically to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many people who are not saved have faith in God and faith in God's goodness and faith in God's love (James 2:19), because they have not put their trust in the finished cross work of Christ. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Mat. 7:21-23).

The following lyrics to the song "Lovely Mausoleum" by the group Big Tent Revival (from the album *Open All Nite*, 1996) illustrate the hazy, erroneous CCM gospel:

"Sunrise open your eyes/ When are you gonna see? New day coming your way/ What is it gonna be?"

Chorus: "Your choice, your voice/ You are in control/ Jesus, Jesus/ He will make you whole" (Big Tent Revival, "Lovely Mausoleum").

There is no gospel here. What new day is coming my way? What is my choice? I am in control of what? Who is Jesus? What does He have to do with a sunrise for me? How does He make me whole?

Consider Don Francisco. When he does give the gospel in his songs, it is often unclear. Consider the words to "Step across the Line" from the *Forgiven* album:

"You gotta take a step across the line/ Let Jesus fill your heart and mind/ I can show you where to look/ but you gotta seek to find."

Is that a clear presentation of the gospel? Could someone be born again through that? Contemporary Christian Music evangelism is almost always this hazy. Consider another example. This one is from Francisco's song "I Don't Care Where You've Been Sleeping."

"I don't care where you've been sleepin'/ I don't care who's made your bed/ I've already gave my life to set you free/ There's no sin you could imagine/ That's stronger than my love/ And it's yours if you will come back home."

It is wonderfully true that Christ died for all of our sins and that His grace is sufficient to forgive any sin, but how do we receive His forgiveness? How can a person be born again? A hazy "come back home" is not the answer. Come back home to what? Don Francisco's audience is a mixed multitude of believers and the religious lost. What does "come back home" mean to them? Come back home to the Roman Catholic sacraments? Come back home to baptismal regeneration? Come back home to the "hold on tight because you might lose it" insecurity of an Assemblies of God gospel? Come back home to what? Most CCM musicians do not make the message clear because they do not have a strong understanding of Bible doctrine and because they do not want to cause divisions.

Here's another example of Don Francisco's gospel. This one is from his song "Give Your Heart a Home."

"If you are tired and weary, weak and heavy laden/ I can understand how it feels to be alone/ I will take your burden/ If you let me love you/ Wrap my arms around you and give your heart a home."

This is not the message that the apostles preached. It is not anything like the messages that were preached in the book of Acts.

CCM performer Dallas Holm was trained by Pentecostal evangelist Dave Wilkerson. Note the following feeling-oriented gospel message from the song "Love Has Come over Me" (from the album *Chain of Grace*, 1992):

"So won't you make a fresh evaluation/ Think about your life, about your soul/ He can touch your heart and make you whole/ Then you will have a wonderful sensation/ When you decide to give Him everything/ Then you'll join the holy celebration/ And lift your voice and begin to sing. Chorus: Because/ Love has come over me/ Captured my spirit/ Set my soul free/ Now I just can't believe/ How different I am since/ Love has come over me."

Is salvation deciding "to give Him everything"? Who is "Him"? There are many false christs and false gods in this world. Which one is Holm singing about? His fans won't know from listening to this song. Is salvation a wonderful sensation? Not necessarily. Salvation is often a sensation of struggle and trial. Oftentimes salvation is no sensation at all as far as a feeling. The hazy message of "love coming over me" is too vague to be of help to the young people who listen to CCM. In the context of the ecumenical confusion that surrounds Contemporary Christian Music and the New Age confusion that surrounds young people today, this message could mean almost anything. It could refer to a faithful Catholic attending Mass or a baptismal regenerationist at his baptismal service or a Laughing Revival proponent becoming "drunk in the spirit." The ecumenical movement thrives on hazy doctrine like this.

Note the following "gospel" message by the Imperials:

"Friend, I know where you're comin' from/ Seems your life's under the gun/ With no real chance of escape/ There is hope right outside your door/ It's what you've been searchin' for/ A love that will never fade/ So don't you run away/ Don't run away/ You can't hide/ Gotta keep reachin'/ You must keep reachin'/ Gotta keep reachin' for higher things" ("Higher Things," The Imperials, 1988, *Free the Fire* album).

What does this song mean? It's hard to tell. If it's for the unsaved, it presents a false gospel that salvation is obtained by a continual reaching for God. "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:8,9). If the song, on the other hand, is for the saved, it says hope is "outside your door." This is false. The Bible says "Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Following is an eyewitness account of the message which was presented by the News Boys on their 1997 "Take Me to Your Leader Tour." This tour was voted #1 by *CCM Magazine*.

"Then the music stopped and what was to be their gospel message began. The band member who spoke said to the effect, we should have a passion for our faith, that people should see we are different, we should be salty Christians, that we should tell our friends what Jesus did in our lives and how God has changed us. He told how salt preserves, and how we can help stop the spread of decay and corruption and how if we lose our saltiness we are good for nothing. ... In conclusion he said to those who didn't know Jesus to ask those they came with or ask someone around them about what Jesus did in their lives and he said to the effect, before going back into their rock music, 'I know you don't want to hear anymore preaching'" (John Beardsley, "The Invasion Begins: A Review of the News Boys *Take Me to Your Leader Tour*," *The Christian Conscience*, 1997).

That was the only message that was given. The young people were not told about their fallen condition. They were not warned of eternal Hell. They were not told the gospel. They were not told how to be saved. We must recall, too, that the lyrics to the rock songs performed by the News Boys are vague. Further, the words are almost impossible to understand because of the riotous music.

Reviewing the News Boys' *Take Me to Your Leader* concert, even a local secular newspaper noted the lack of clarity to the message: "Although most of the choruses are straightforward, THE VERSES ARE HARD TO FOLLOW, A FLAW THAT SERVES TO TRIVIALIZE THE BAND'S CHRISTIAN MESSAGE. ... Built on lyrics that leave too many holes to be filled, THE BAND'S MESSAGE GETS LOST SOMEWHERE IN THE ALTERNATIVE MUSIC" (*Rapid City Journal*, Rapid City, South Dakota, May 13, 1997).

The WOW 1998 CD contains 30 top CCM songs for the year, thus giving us a clear window into the world of Contemporary Christian Music. The CD jacket says, "This is music that can make an eternal difference," yet there is no clear gospel presentation in any of the music. How can it then make an eternal difference?

We could give countless other examples of this, but to me it is obvious that a large percentage of “decisions” made in the context of Contemporary Christian Music are suspect because the message being presented is either unclear or overtly unscriptural.

There are exceptions to this, of course, but exceptions do not make a rule.

Second, the decisions made in the context of Contemporary Christian Music are suspect because of the atmosphere.

Not only are the CCM salvation statistics suspect because of the murky message, they are also suspect because of the atmosphere created by the music itself. Powerful music can produce emotional decisions, but biblical salvation is not the product of an emotional decision. It is the product of Holy Spirit-wrought repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel.

Note the following warnings from men who are very knowledgeable about music:

“The element of relentless beat in rock music increases THE DANGER OF A SHALLOW, EMOTIONAL, UNTHINKING RESPONSE, made at the wrong level and for the wrong reasons” (John Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 23)

“In loading our evangelistic programmes with manipulative music, are we not greatly increasing the RISKS OF PRODUCING ‘CONVERSIONS’ THAT ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL? The set-up could not be more perfect. Impressionable young people can undoubtedly be so conditioned by the music that they are much more likely to accept whatever the preacher says. Add a good communicator and the chances are that he will produce an impressive number of ‘decisions.’ However, THE DANGER IS THAT THESE ‘DECISIONS’ ARE THE RESULT OF MUSICAL CONDITIONING RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL CONVICTION” (John Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*).

“One day I talked with a pastor who had been in charge of follow-up after a large city wide evangelistic campaign. Christian rock had been used prominently throughout the meetings. Several hundred young people had responded to the invitation at the close of the services. This is what he reported: ‘A few weeks after the meetings I had difficulty finding any who had signed decision cards. There were none in the churches, none attending Bible studies, NONE GOING ON WITH THE LORD AT ALL.’ He concluded that THE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE RESPONDING TO THE MUSIC MORE THAN TO THE MESSAGE” (Lowell Hart, *Satan’s Music Exposed*, p. 180).

“Here is the testimony of Phil, a young man who had been saved out of a rock band: ‘In 1973 I became a Christian after playing with rock bands and being in the music business for about seven years. ... Some well-meaning Christians encouraged me to ‘use my talents for the Lord,’ so we formed a group to play what we considered to be the new Christian sound. It was nothing more than secular rock with Christian words. We thought that the type of music we played, the length of our hair and the way we dressed would more effectively reach these young people. We gave our testimonies with soft, slow music in the background. When we gave the invitation sometimes a hundred or more teenagers would come forward. Were these conversions genuine? We decided to begin a follow-up. We were shocked to find that almost everyone who had given us an address had gone back to their old ways. I can’t think of one person I could show you today as fruit of our ministry. I REALIZE NOW THAT THEY WERE RESPONDING TO THE MUSIC, NOT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Phil Wilson, June 1978, quoted in *Satan’s Music Exposed*, pp. 180, 181).

Third, the decisions made in the context of Contemporary Christian Music are suspect because of the medium.

A large percentage of CCM is so loud and raucous that the words are not clear. How can the gospel be presented in its saving power if the very words are not plain! This exposes the hypocrisy of CCM defenders. They know that the message is frequently unclear, yet they claim that it is the message that is important and that the music is insignificant! If they would be honest, I believe they would be forced to admit that what is preeminent to them is their love of sensual music.

A man who attended an Audio Adrenaline/dc Talk concert in Rapid City, South Dakota, testified, "All the while the music was so loud if anyone could hear the words it wasn't enough to get a message from; hence, the reaction was to the 'rock' beat not the words" (John Beardsley, "DC Talk Examined," *The Christian Conscience*, June 1996).

I experienced the same thing when I attended a Christian rock concert put on by a Southern Baptist church in Oklahoma City in 2001. The music was so loud and grinding and the singers were screaming so fiercely that it was impossible to understand the lyrics.

Consider the following description of a Sheila Walsh concert, and she is not known as a particularly loud Christian rocker: "For some of us, however, communication ended when she sang because, more often than not, the band was too loud for us to catch the words" (*Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 159).

While in Nashville, Tennessee, a few years ago on my way to a preaching meeting, I listened to WAYFM radio station, which advertises itself as "Christian Hit Radio." I was completing my research in preparation to writing the book *Contemporary Christian Music under the Spotlight*. They played a skit that made fun of using Bible terms to reach today's generation, alleging that no one can understand terms such as "justification," "sanctification," or "grace." Instead, "Christian Hit Radio" professes to communicate plainly on a level people today can understand. Having heard that, I listened carefully to song after song to see what message they are presenting. Though I listened off and on for hours, not one song gave a clear gospel message. There was not even a clear Bible message of any sort. In fact, the words to many of the songs were difficult to impossible to understand. I concluded that while it is true that they are not using difficult Bible terms, they also are not communicating a clear Bible message, so their boast is meaningless.

This is true for Contemporary Christian Music at large.

Fourth, the decisions made in the context of Contemporary Christian Music are suspect because of the fruit.

If Contemporary Christian Music is of God, the fruit will be genuine salvation, holiness, perseverance in the faith, sound doctrine, Christian discipleship. In a nutshell, the fruit will be obedience to the Bible.

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:3).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

“He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 8:47).

John Blanchard researched 13 mission agencies in Britain to see how many of their candidates were converted at Christian rock concerts. Not one was found. The following reply was typical: “I cannot call to mind anybody who has been converted through this type of youth evangelism and has subsequently gone to missionary service” (*Pop Goes the Gospel*, pp. 110-112).

When decisions made at Christian rock concerts in Britain were followed up, it was found that very few were genuine. For example, of 200 decisions recorded at one youth meeting, only four attended a follow-up session. Of the 100 students who made “decisions” in a school visited by a CCM performance, only one later showed even “a mild interest” in Christian things (*Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 110).

The devil has provided many alternatives to the new birth and there are many sorts of false professions of salvation. Note the Bible’s warnings:

- * A person can believe in God and not be saved (James 2:19).
- * A person can pray to Jesus and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can prophesy in Jesus’ name and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can do wonderful works in Jesus’ name and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can have a zeal for God and not be saved (Rom. 10:2-3).
- * A person can have a zeal to make proselytes for God and not be saved (Matt. 23:15).
- * A person can be very interested in Jesus Christ and not be saved (Matt. 19:16-22).
- * A person can profess to know God and not be saved (Titus 1:16).
- * A person can follow Jesus for a while and not be saved (Jn. 6:66).
- * A person can serve Christ as an apostle and not be saved (John 6:70).
- * A person can even believe on Jesus’ name and not be saved (John 2:23-24).

“Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men” (Jn. 2:23-24).

The reason these people were not saved is because they did not believe on Jesus as their Lord and Saviour from sin but as their worldly messiah who would feed them and rescue them from their political enemies (Jn. 6:26).

Fifth, the decisions made in the context of Contemporary Christian Music are suspect because of the scant emphasis on the gospel.

I have been investigating Contemporary Christian Music off and on for 35 years and intently for over a decade. I have listened to and read the lyrics to hundreds of songs, visited at hundreds of web sites produced by CCM musicians and their fans, listened to CCM radio stations in various parts of the country, etc.

My conclusion is that there is *some* gospel preaching done by CCM artists, but this is definitely *not* the main emphasis of CCM. In fact, evangelism comes across as a very low priority, generally speaking.

Consider the **songs** themselves. Only a VERY tiny percentage of CCM songs present a clear gospel.

Consider the **websites**. The majority of websites produced by CCM artists or fans do not contain a gospel message or a challenge to the unsaved.

Most **biographies or interviews** of CCM artists do not contain a clear testimony of salvation or any challenge to the unsaved.

As we have seen, it is common for CCM **concerts** NOT to give a clear gospel message. There are exceptions, but we are speaking here of the general picture.

Charlie Peacock polled 35 popular CCM artists and asked them “to estimate the number of letters received from non-Christians over the span of their careers.” Peacock concluded: “... over 50% gave ten or fewer letters as their answer. ... we must give serious consideration to the possibility that we’re producing very little evangelism and cultural penetration for the cause of Christ.” (Peacock, *At the Crossroads*, p. 184).

When all of these elements are combined (no gospel preaching, vague lyrics, deafening music, little emphasis on evangelism), it is impossible to believe that large numbers of young people are being genuinely saved through Contemporary Christian Music.

Emotional decisions and experiences, vague faith in God, reformation, religious commitments, rebuilding of self esteem--none of these things add up to biblical salvation. Biblical salvation is a supernatural new birth, and it comes through faith in the gospel.

Distributed by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service, an e-mail listing for Fundamental Baptists and other fundamentalist, Bible-believing Christians. Established in 1974, Way of Life Literature is a fundamental Baptist preaching and publishing ministry based in Bethel Baptist Church, London, Ontario, of which Wilbert Unger is the founding Pastor. Brother Cloud lives in South Asia where he has been a church planting missionary since 1979. OUR GOAL IN THIS PARTICULAR ASPECT OF OUR MINISTRY IS NOT DEVOTIONAL BUT IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO ASSIST PREACHERS IN THE PROTECTION OF THE CHURCHES IN THIS APOSTATE HOUR. This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the list. If somehow you have subscribed unintentionally, following are the instructions for removal. The Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list is automated. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html> . TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click "Manage My Subscription." If you have any trouble with this, please let us know. We take up a quarterly offering to fund this ministry, and those who use the materials are expected to participate (Galatians 6:6) if they can. Some of the articles are from O Timothy magazine, which is in its 28th year of publication. Way of Life publishes many helpful books. The catalog is located at the web site: <http://www.wayoflife.org/publications/index.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. We do not solicit funds from those who do not agree with our preaching and who are not helped by these publications, but only from those who are. OFFERINGS can be made at <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/makeanoffering.html>. PAYPAL offerings can be made to <https://www.paypal.com/xclick/business=dcloud%40wayoflife.org>

WAY OF LIFE LITERATURE SHARING POLICY: Way of Life's content falls into two categories: sharable and non-sharable. Much of our material is available for free, such as the hundreds of articles at the Way of Life web site. These are sharable. Other items we sell to help fund our very expensive literature, video, and foreign church planting ministry. These are not sharable. Things that we encourage you to share include the audio sermons, video presentations, O Timothy magazine, and the hundreds of Fundamental Baptist Information Service (FBIS) articles. You are free to make copies of these at your own expense and share them with friends and family. You are also welcome to use excerpts from the articles. All we ask is that you give proper credit. Things we do not want copied and redistributed are items like the Fundamental Baptist Digital Library, the print and eBook editions of our books, etc. These items have taken years to produce at enormous expense in time and money, and we need the income from the sale of these to help fund the ministry. We trust that your Christian honesty will preserve the integrity of this policy.